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TAI CHI

Text by W. S. Ruben
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PART ONE

Introduction: THE HEALTH GAP: EAST AND WEST

Tai-chi began, many experts believe, about thirteen hundred years ago in China. At that time, during the T'ang dynasty, Taoist monks would spend many hours sitting under the shade of trees, thinking and meditating. While all this tended to improve their minds, they soon became aware that their bodies were suffering. They discovered what modern physical educators know, that one's energy decreases as circulation fails. One way to cause circulation to decrease is to lead a totally sedentary life. Men simply cannot live a healthy life without exercise. It is for this very reason astronauts are given tension exercises to perform while they are cooped up in the small confines of their space capsule. However the exercise that one robust individual can perform may be harmful to another person. The fact is not all of us are physically capable of playing strenuous sports such as handball, basketball or capable of weightlifting. Many men and women have taken up jogging, which like so many fads, is often performed without medical advice. Even now physicians disagree as to whether jogging is beneficial or indeed harmful in some cases. The point is that every type of sport or exercise involving tension and strains, and physical exertion have built in limitations. Many are just dangerous, especially for older people. Then again, not too many of us want to spend hard earned money on special equipment. What we'd like is an activity that doesn't depend on the weather or having to get special uniforms or is going to be a drudge. Let's face it, we're spoiled. Tai-chi caters to our bad habits and improves on them.

Well, the Taoist monks if anything, were wise. But they were more than perceptive. They had a tradition, a philosophy of life, an attitude toward society that was at once poetic and imaginative. It was their belief that whatever was in the Chinese soul, when given safe release from restraint would humanize and make life more pleasurable.

Philosophically opposed to force, the monks recognized they could utilize their very bodies so that they might continue to meditate, and still feed the body the very exercise it needed to grow.

What evolved was a series of movements, which were to be performed slowly, intentionally so, without *any* strain at all. While performing these movements it is mandatory that one does not strain. You perform as many of the exercises or forms as they are called, as you are capable. When you want to stop you do! Consistency and quality is more important than quantity. You avoid any kind of pressure, whether it is physical or emotional. We'll go into the forms and movements later. Right now it would be in order to give you an idea of what's behind Tai Chi, to learn why this ancient Chinese body and mind conditioning program is ideally suited for American men and women of all ages.

T'ai-chi Ch'uan (pronounced tie-chee-chwan) cannot be literally translated. The words relate to energy within the body, to life, to air and to the mind. They bring into combination all those forces which exist within all of us, so that they may work together.

What makes Tai-chi particularly suited for older men and women is that the relaxing movements are designed to be performed deliberately slowly. Professor Cheng Man Ch'ing, a grand Master of Tai'chi, and author of many books on the subject, explains "The value of Tai-chi Ch'uan lies in the fact that it is a thoroughly balanced movement, works your internal organs as well as your external body, and lifts your entire system to an optimized peak efficiency, bodily as well as mentally. Its beauty is implied in its softness and profoundness."

Probably the most used and abused term directed at all of us, old and young, caught in the rat race of just making a living, is "Learn to relax!" Everybody gets this advice easily and often. But no one seems to know how to spell it out. Tai-chi demonstrates that learning to relax can be achieved. If there is any one benefit at all to be derived from mastering Tai-chi, it is the benefit of achieving the ability to relax.

This desire for inner tranquility is not unique to any one culture. However the Chinese did more than just desire. There are many stories as to how Tai-chi came about. Some are romantic fantasies. Others are based on historical fact. Probably Tai-chi just evolved over the centuries, as much a part of a culture as anything else. But we do know it is related to Taoism, which is not a religion, but rather a philosophy of life. Because Tai-chi involves both performance and attitude, it is especially relevant to today's fast paced life.

One doesn't have to be a student of history to appreciate Taoism. Its thinking is concerned with the avoidance of absolutes, the very demands which lead so many of us into states of tension. Lin Yutang quotes Chuang-ste in *In The Wisdom of India and China*, " 'From the point of view of Tao,' replied the Spirit of the Ocean, 'there are no such distinctions of high and low. From the point of view of individuals, each holds himself high and holds others low. From the vulgar point of view, high and low (honors and dishonors) are something conferred by others."

This is the philosophy of balance, the very heart of Tai Chi. In a desperate desire to 'do something' to get us out of our sedentary life, many of us have taken to harsh exercises. If we think we're helping our bodies, we may be surprised to learn that, too often, we're just punishing ourselves. Many more older people have resorted to a 'balanced' diet of pills to keep going, and pills tc stay awake, which results in a rather dangerous cycle. Some of us don't know how to get off this merry-go-round.

As you will read soon, Tai-chi is fundamentally based on

body balance, naturally and quite simply. When this is achieved, mental and spiritual balance follow, a peace of mind that enables one to be more effective in all his work. In a sense we are all prisoners of our inability to keep our lives in balance.

In a very literal sense, Dr. Alexander Shaanan, when staff physician at Sing Sing prison had to deal with men who were leading relatively calm, certainly ordered, lives physically. But many were suffering all sorts of mental pressures. A Tai-chi program was planned for the prisoners. Dr. Shaanan told a *Newsweek Magazine* reporter, "The Chinese exercise should increase the user's range of motion, reactivate some muscles, overcome fatigue, and generally give the prisoners a better feeling."

"A better feeling" is precisely what those Taoist monks wanted hundreds of years ago. It certainly is no less than every one of us, caught in today's tense pace, would hope for ourselves. Tai-chi, as Dr. Allen Russek when Director of Social Services at the N.Y.U. Medical Center, said, is, "an excellent self-disciplinary activity for the development of muscular coordination."

Tai-chi is also a popular activity at the United Nations, where former dancer Sophia Delza instructs many of the delegates. There's no doubt they are confronted with some of the most tension-producing problems in the world today. Miss Delza believes that Tai-chi increases blood circulation, and nourishes the muscles. However, and this is what makes all instruction in Tai-chi particularly appropriate for older men and women as Miss Delza commented, "If you are straining yourself you are not doing it correctly."

As you continue to perform Tai-chi you not only develop a feeling of physical well being but reshape your attitude toward life. Your problems won't disappear. But you will be able to face them better. Miss Delza told James Biery, writing in *Popular Mechanics*, "We, in the west are apt to overexert ourselves in exercise and sports, believing that a hard, tense movement indicates strength, and that power

comes from the ability to expend energy violently. Contrary to such a point of view, it is in the philosophy of Tai-chi Ch'uan that true energy can be controlled, strength balanced, vitality stabilized, only by using the body in such a way as not to strain the muscle, not to overactivate the heart, not to exert oneself excessively."

This is why Tai-chi is performed in a slow, gentle, even charmingly beautiful manner. While there are many thousands of young people performing these graceful movements, thousands more in their middle years have found Tai-chi a practical answer for body and mind conditioning.

Whether or not one can achieve ultimate perfection is less important than the relaxation Tai-chi provides as you practice the forms daily. It is claimed by grand masters of the art that in time it is possible to perform the movements in one's mind. In that ultimate achievement one simply concentrates as if he were actually performing the movements, achieving the same results as if they were being done physically.

This state of meditative concentration may be beyond the hopes or even desire of most of us who are concerned with the problems of bucking subways, earning a living and worrying about the state of the world. The practice of Tai-chi can lead to continuing and lasting benefits just by being performed.

Very simply Tai-chi is designed to provide a healthier life. This system of health-achieving exercises can be realized, according to Cheng Man-ch'ing, through one's natural ability, perseverance and correct teaching. Professor Cheng puts at the forefront of these three musts, "correct teaching and perserverance." For whatever we can show you in this book, nothing here will replace having a good teacher. Devotees of Tai-chi suggest it is better to miss a meal than taking the few minutes necessary to perform Tai-chi.

That is something westerners, and particular Americans, may find difficult. As Confucius wrote in "*The Doctrine of the Mean,* "Some are born with knowledge, some derive

it from study, and some acquire It only after a painful realization of their ignorance. But the knowledge being possessed, it comes to the same thing."

So if you're having difficulty sleeping nights, if you're overweight, if you have complaints which you can't diagnose, if you're subject to accidents, having trouble with your eyesight, there's no question you should see a physician. And while you're about it, ask him about Tai-chi.

Robert Anter, Assistant Professor of Economics at Pace College in New York City said, "Tai-chi Ch'uan is never dull. But most of all Tai-chi Ch'uan is enjoyable and much of the enjoyment comes from the people who play Tai-chi Ch'uan. Whether Tai-chi Ch'uan produces such people or whether it attracts such people that form a pleasant group (it really doesn't matter)."

CHAPTER ONE

FROM TAO TO TODAY

The foundation Tai-chi was based in some very practical thinking, formulated by men who were realists. Although some teachers say there are 108 forms, others 128, Professor Cheng Man-ch'ing has given us thirty-seven, which he claims is the synthesis of all that are necessary. But without the philosophy of Taoism, much of the meaning of Tai-chi would be lost.

Da Liu, both a Chinese philosopher and physical therapist, compared Tai-chi to another ancient discipline in a *Newsday* article. "But while Yoga puts people into contracted positions and leaves them there, Tai-chi is a continuous movement through 108 natural gestures." Da Liu went on to add that one of his students at the China Institute was a 90 year old woman.

Tai-chi may be considered a circle divided by a graceful curve, then divided into two equal parts; a positive or solid portion known as the Yang; the negative, the Yin. The exercises were planned to create a continuous, smooth flowing movement, completing a circular motion.

Tai-chi must not be regarded as some eccentric exercise. The ancient philosophers based Tai-chi on some very

profound and sound principles. As Da Liu explained, "Many of the movements (of Tai-chi) are named for animals that have displayed wisdom in the art of survival. . . Yin stands for softness, inactivity, passive femaleness, and night; Yang stands for firmness, activity, male strength, and day. Interaction of these cognates is said to explain all change in universe. To unite them successfully is Grand-Terminus, consummate embodiment of softness and firmness; retreat and advance. In Tai-chi we see demonstrated basic Taoist principle of wisdom of appearing foolish, success of appearing to fail. If you practice Tai-chi every day, your temperament changes. You grow still like mountain, active like flowing water."

Tao (incidentally pronounced dow) means reason, path, word or road. It is a means of travel. In a sense Tai-chi is the means of travel to a healthier mental and physical life.

To better understand how Tai-chi relates to the body and mind, the following comment by a 17th century Chinese philosopher will help: (as translated by Lin Yutang in *The Importance of Understanding*):

"Human life depends entirely upon this vital force (the energy which abets growth). That is why it is said that one must keep poise to maintain it. All thinking and all deliberations come from this calm and poise, a state of complete rest from vexations when one can call oneself master of a situation. That is why it is also said, 'Let the environment be disturbing but let the mind be calm.' For when the mind can master that equilibrium, one feels that the environmental circumstances. The method is therefore not to seek relaxation in material conditions, but in the mind."

Notice how many times the words 'equilibrium' or 'balance' are used. What the ancients realized was that balance meant being able to deal with life. And that's what Tai-chi is all about, too.'

Professor Cheng Man-ch'ing, who was kind enough to spend much time with us, has based his over forty years of

devotion to Tai-chi on the fact that complete relaxation and concentration is the keynote. In his "Thirteen Chapters on Tai-chi Chuan" he wrote, "Because of the close link between the outward posture and the inner state, different disciplined movements of Tai-chi Ch'uan are also intended to carry out different internal exercises of the human system."

The Taoist monks meant Tai-chi to be more than a physical exercise. The physical training was only a means toward achieving the highest level of a controlled and coordinated body, mind and consciousness. The slow, relaxing movements were designed to assist the mind in concentration. Although the movements are precise and disciplined, there is no strain on the body, rather each is designed to keep the student's body in balance.

Yet, such was the perception of those Taoist monks that, in developing a program for the whole mind, a dynamic technique for offense also resulted. Because Tai-chi involves concepts of physiology, psychology, biology as well as other sciences, the healthy conditioning produced a controlled and coordinated body. Here the basic concept of balance comes into play. As Professor Cheng related, there is developed a perfect unison in the movement of the legs, arms, waist and body. When one's foot is lifted, the other foot and body should stay balanced as if the whole bodily system were rooted to the ground. One's own sense of balance thus enables the student to detect an opponent's imbalance, keeping one from being vulnerable to sudden attack.

Perhaps it was the preponderance of bandits in China those many hundreds of years ago, or maybe it was just a happy result, but Tai-chi took advantage of the fact that the monks were not physically capable of performing strong arm tactics.

While the martial aspects of Tai-chi are still taught, the qreater emphasis today, as it was seven hundred years

ago, is on achieving a more personal peace of mind and body.

In performing Tai-chi, the student is only in competition with himself. Instructor Sophia Delza said, "There is always a struggle to achieve perfection. That's what makes it so fascinating."

Tens of thousands in the United States today, and millions throughout history, have found the practice of Tai-chi not only a bodily exercise, but an effective mental preparation for facing the rigors of life's every day problems. They found, as you may, that the ultimate perfection of physical performance begins in the mind.

Because the Taoist monks were practical men, Tai-chi was devised so it could be performed anywhere, in the privacy of one's own home. But the forms must be practiced, at least twice a day, regularly and consistently.

Cheng Man-ch'ing's philosophy, as a teacher of Tai-chi, is important to know, mainly because only a relatively small number have had the privilege of being his students. We'd like to pass on to you some of his comments so that you, too, will be able to profit from Tai-chi, know how to select a good teacher and to learn just how much you can do for yourself.

CHAPTER TWO
FUNDAMENTALS

A young associate of Cheng Man-ch'ing was asked what he thought was the most important consideration in learning Tai-chi. Without hesitating, he answered, "One must have a good teacher. That is important."

What he went on to suggest was, that when any serious discipline becomes taken up as a fad, there are bound to be those who will abuse and exploit it. Although Cheng Man-ch'ing has formulated a series of movements which can be performed alone, there is still no substitute for finding the right teacher.

A good teacher, it was explained, can not be put off balance in a one-to-one confrontation with a student. Since equilibrium is at the very heart of Tai-chi this test is most important. There are some who differ in degree as to the forms and movements of Tai-chi. They may still be very good teachers. But the prospective student should choose wisely, check references and be sure that he may be able to say of his teachers as Robert Smith said of Professor Cheng in their book, "Cheng Man-ch'ing is a remarkable man. . .Every bit a gentleman, he is the living representa-

tion of Tai-chi. I have studied many systems of Tai-chi and have had the opportunity to see in action the leading teachers of Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore. None can stand before Cheng."

Professor Cheng, we were told, has been adamant about poor teachers. According to his Grand Master, who is also a poet, painter and calligrapher, a bad teacher can be very harmful.

Finding a good teacher does not preclude one from studying Tai-chi and practicing at home. For equal to receiving proper instruction is developing the habit of consistent practice. For whether you are studying in a class or alone, self discipline is the greatest tutor.

As we have said earlier, Tai-chi is concerned with man's intrinsic energy. 'Chi' is to the individual what physicists once thought 'ether' was to the universe. It is there, but it is unexplained. Yet it is at the root of all bodily movements.

In Tai-chi the desire is to make every part of the body relaxed and loose without losing control, so that they all may move in perfect harmony.

To maintain this relaxed, tension-free feeling, breathing properly becomes an integral part of each Tai-chi movement. For this reason the clothes worn must be loose and unrestricted. Good breathing assists respiration. Muscles become better nourished. And, as waste material is better disposed, digestion and metabolism improve.

Before beginning any Tai-chi movement you should breathe in and out, not forcefully, but fully. For it is essential in Tai-chi that you do nothing to strain yourself. And as you continue to do your forms, breathing effectively will become an unaware part of the movements. To achieve this, the mouth should be closed, not tightly, but definitely. Breathing is done through the nose.

Because Tai-chi proceeds deliberately and slowly you

might find yourself tempted to yawn. Don't suppress it. Continue with your movements.

If you think these suggestions of looseness and lack of inhibition remind you of an infant or a small child, you are perfectly correct.

Cheng Man-ch'ing notes in his book *Tai-chi*, which was co-authored by Robert W. Smith, "Note how he (the child) breathes—not high in the chest but low in the abdomen. See, too, how he meets an accident—relaxed and with no apprehension in his mind. . .So perhaps the experience/intelligence clogging the adult's mind and causing his body to stiffen is really not such an asset after all . . .Tai-chi believes that progress can be made only if one becomes like a child."

In other words, with all the perception of an adult, comes an awareness of life's problems. With this awareness also come tensions. Tai-chi takes advantage of a mature capability of self-discipline and a child's relaxed demeanour to provide a physically and mentally balanced adult.

Every movement in Tai-chi is done at a constant tempo. While you even may work at a slow speed if it is comfortable for you, it should be consistent, so that the full circular motion of Tai-chi will be most effective.

As you increase your performances of Tai-chi you'll begin to notice that your whole physical being is comported with less effort. At one time you might have been exerting pressures on certain muscles to walk, stand or perform any function. Tai-chi enables you to hold yourself with less or no strain because your muscles are working in balance.

Don't think you're too fat or too thin, too tall or too short to do Tai-chi. In the same sense that you perform movements according to your own demands, and at your own level, you adjust to whatever your physical condition is. You may not think you look as graceful as some better proportioned individual. But the important matter is that, as you master Tai-chi, you will become more graceful and more satisfied with yourself.

IN THE BEGINNING

As you perform each posture you will go through a series of lesser (but not less important) movements. Each one of these movements begins with the toes, heel and soles of the feet, extending in influence through the ankles up to the waist, along the spinal column, continuing into the arms and hands, up to the neck, head and shoulders. In short, every part of the body comes into play. With every part of the body free from tenseness, the body will be lowered or raised, will shift forward or back, to the left or the right, all the while synchronized with one's breathing. These movements are not so complicated as it seems when written. They do take practice, lots of it. You won't reach perfection in a month or year or perhaps forty years. But you will begin to find an inner as well as outer tranquility—and that will be evidenced almost immediately.

Here are some hints to keep in mind:

1. Be calm. That means the entire body, including your face and features. This doesn't mean you aren't in control of the situation. Think of a small child, how it holds without tension, yet holds nevertheless.
2. Concentrate wholly and exclusively on what you are doing.
3. Your feet should be set firmly, the bend of the knee never going further than the outer reaches of the toe. Don't lift one foot until the other has been set firmly in position.
4. The movements of the arm will generally complete a circle, alternately rising and falling.
5. Don't strain yourself or go beyond your capacity. You are not in competition with anyone else. *You* are your only opponent.
6. Above all dress, feel, and perform in a comfortable manner. This may go against the bad habits of a lifetime. But, after all, that's what Tai-chi is designed to correct.

CHAPTER THREE
THE AMAZING MR. LIU

In our search for more personal information about Tai-chi and, more especially about the people who study it, we went down town to the edges of Chinatown in New York City. It was a Sunday afternoon, a pleasant day, when you would rather expect men and women would be out walking in the park, at the ball game, or otherwise spending their time relaxing. But at this time a Tai-chi class for beginners was in session. Who were they? Well we observed young married couples, hesitatingly enrolling. There were some older, rather obese men, and one much too fat woman. There were some young men and women, one would gather, in their early twenties. A few men seemed well past fifty, as were one or two of the women. Some were dressed in the latest mod clothes, others in old, weather beaten jeans. But all were clothed comfortably as they must be. A few were Chinese, but mostly they were white and black. In other words; they were as representative a group as one would expect in a cosmopolitan city. However, they were all anxious to learn Tai-chi, for whatever personal reason brought them.

Some, when questioned said they were just interested in 'something new.' Others were shy about their answers. One gathered they were looking for a way of relaxing, without

'getting high.' Some wanted to just 'feel better.' (We understand the drop out rate from the classes is very low.) But they all had one thing in common, they were sincere.

When the class began, they were, as one would expect, awkward.

Tai-chi is deceptive. What seems so easy to the neophyte is really a product of years of practice. It is not that Tai-chi is that difficult, but it brings into play every muscle of the body, something no new member of the class had experienced. There were appreciative sighs of agreement as the teacher was able to move and turn with graceful slowness. But they were reminded Tai-chi is not a dance, although one new member was a professional dancer, and one man was an actor. Each wanted to learn how control his body so as to be more proficient in his profession.

Then there was respectful silence. Each student was corrected with a motion or a silent direction by the teacher or one of his assistants.

A large mirror covered one wall so the students could see that side of the teacher which would otherwise be hidden from view. The class performed the very movements you will see illustrated throughout these pages. These are the same movements, with slight modifications, of those performed by the Taoist monks seven centuries ago.

In an hour the class was over. While the entire series of movements should take no more than twenty minutes, the class had barely covered the series. And in proficiency, hardly at all. In time with home practice they would move with subtlety and dexterity, controlling their bodies as they never had before.

While Tai-chi is being taken up by the young, even the very young, it was essentially thought of as a series of exercises for those who had lived rather sedentary lives. It is not unusual, therefore to see classes of middle-aged and the very old. For Tai-chi is ideally suited to the old (and, we might add, for those younger people who move around as if they were old).

It was, while searching out classes of older people, we met Liu Yao-Ting, who, at the age of 81 is not only practicing Tai-chi regularly, but teaching Tai-chi to members of private classes.

This remarkable man was at one time a Postal Commissioner of Nationalist China. While we do not claim to have any substantiating facts about what Mr. Liu claims for his own regeneration, we do have the fact of first hand observation that he is, indeed, a most unusual man.

As Mr. Liu wrote of himself when "he was already sixty nine years old and of failing health on starting to learn and practice this exercise. (Mr. Liu) had had 42 years of service with the government postal service in China and, after retirement from his position as Postal Commissioner on reaching 60, lived in Shanghai until, when 69, he was medically found to be suffering somewhat incipient heart ailments—enlargement of heart, hardening of arteries and irregular pulsations. Only then, he began to learn and practice the Tai-chi Ch'uan health exercise daily under a Grand Master —Mr. Wu Kuei-Ching. After the first year, the ailments were found to have been arrested and, after another year, his heart condition was medically found to have become normal. Ever since, he has performed his daily exercise without let up and his health has continually improved." Mr. Liu went on to claim that he was now in fine health and has spent the last nine years in this country teaching Tai-chi to the middle-aged and older.

Please understand that Mr. Liu's story is only presented because Mr. Liu is a fine figure of an octogenarian. Whether or not you want to believe what he claims for his own health improvement is up to you. We certainly do not make any health claims. In fact, if there are specific health problems, you should consult your own physician. What is good for one person is not necessarily good for another.

There is no substitute for professional health and medical care. What really fascinated us about Mr. Liu was both his ingenuousness and apparent state of perfect health. He was

articulate, and justifiably proud of the classes he was teaching in Tai-chi (incidentally at no charge.) He has given talks on Tai-chi to various organizations about the country. He has developed his own unique system of teaching this ancient Chinese discipline. Since all Masters of Tai-chi vary their teaching slightly, that is as to the flow of the movements, not the basic principles, Mr. Liu has prescribed a system of 16 basic movements which he claims are necessary for beginners to perform. With his permission we repeat them here.

CHAPTER FOUR
YOU AND YOUR BODY

There seems to be no question that Tai-chi Ch'uan influences the function of the body and the mind. There is little doubt among physicians that there is a distinct interrelationship between the mind and the body. While the degree of help from Tai-chi may be debated by the most sincere of people, there is little debate that the serious practicioneer does face life in a manner far different from one who has no experience with Tai-chi.

In *Tai-chi For Health*, Edward Maisel quotes Joseph Needham, a British biochemist, "Techniques of medical gymnastics generally supposed to have been a gift of eighteenth century Sweden to Europe, can be shown to arise in fact directly from the practice of medieval Taoists in China."

Maisel tells how a French missionary brought details of Tai-chi to western Europe and "that is why some of the Tai-chi positions seemed immediately, though remotely familiar to doctors seeing them for the first time today."

Mr. Liu is on very firm ground when he suggests that the mind can be used to serve the body. His public speeches confirm what is becoming more and more accepted when

he affirms that "Modern physical educators all recognize that you cannot condition the body independently of the mind and vice-versa."

But what is this interdependence of the mind and body? What link is there that is a constant force to make the functions of the body more efficient? The Taoist monks knew what they wanted to achieve. But it wasn't until four centuries later that William Harvey, in the 17th century, first articulated the nature of circulation. What Harvey postulated then still stands today in terms of understanding how the bodily organisms are affected.

Michael Foster in a chapter in *Great Adventures in Medicine*, edited by Samuel Rapport and Helen Wright, quotes Harvey. (Notice the parallel with Tai-chi's reference to circular motion, ceaseless motion, and the total involvement of the body.)

"Since all things, both argument and ocular *(what is seen)* demonstration, show that the blood passes through the lungs and heart by action of the ventricles, and is sent for distribution to all parts of the body, where it makes its way into the veins and pores of the flesh, and flows by the veins from the circumference on every side to the center, from the lesser of the greater veins, and is by them finally discharged into the vena cava *(either of two large terminating veins discharging into the right auricle of the heart)* and right auricle of the heart, and this in such a quantity, or is such a flux and reflux thither by the arteries, hither by the veins, as cannot possibly supplied by the ingesta, and is much greater than can be required for mere purposes of nutrition, it is completely necessary to conclude that the blood in the animal's body is impelled in a circle, and is in a state of ceaseless motion; that this is the act or function which the heart performs by means of its pulse; and that it is the sole and only end of the motion and contraction of the heart . . "

The body cannot function properly unless it is completely

integrated. John Tyler Bonner in *The Ideas of Biology* gives a clear explanation of just what this means He writes, ". . . to put elementary fuel particles into all the cells of the body, it is necessary to have a transportation system The blood system not only performs this function but also brings the oxygen to the tissue so that the fuel can be consumer. The specialization of the gut system could not have occurred without the development of a circulatory system . . The interdependence of parts, their proper integration are essential adaptations for the smooth and successful operation of an individual organism."

No wonder then that Masters and instructors in Tai-chi are so concerned with the total involvement of the body, with an equalization of effort, in short the interdependence of all the body's parts, so that the human organism can function more efficiently.

Mr Liu has distributed a pamphlet to his students and to all who are interested, in which he takes up the mechanism of the body's circulation. In relating this to Tai-chi he comments, "All of the system of circulation, respiration and transportation are controlled, co-ordinated, automated and harmonized through the system of communication. The system of communication is made up of the brain, the spinal cord and the nerves that extend throughout the body . . . The nervous system of communication is also activated by muscular contractions. Constant, regular and appropriate muscular contractions not only keep the nervous system active, but also relax tense nerves."

A side word on understanding contractions. Some time ago a friend of this writer was being treated for a lesion in the colon, the pain often causing him to tense up, worsening the effect. The doctor told him to reverse the natural reaction which was to drawn in, but rather to exhale, to subdue the vibrations which were causing the pain. "Something like natural child birth," he commented. The doctor agreed that there was a relationship to this wherein the

woman is told not to fight the contractions, therefore reducing the painful affects.

What this has to do with Tai-chi is obvious when you consider the fact that this discipline insists on an avoidance of strain, does not want the practicioneer to tire or force himself to act beyond his natural limits.

Since Tai-chi Ch'uan is concerned with body and mental balance you might be interested to know that this idea is at the heart of man's survival. In *Modern Science and the Nature of Life* Dr. William S. Beck writes, "Homeostasis is . . . one of the great central ideas of biology, for it interlaces every aspect of biological organization . . . It is homeostasis the effort of the organismic machine to restore its full equilibrium whenever disturbed – that gives the organism an appearance of purposive behavior . . ."

Nature insists that balance between all its elements is necessary for growth and the maintenance of a healthy life Rapport and Wright in *Great Adventures in Medicine* stress the relationship between homeostasis, stress and disease. They tell us what Masters and students of Tai-chi know first hand, not medically, but personally, that living organisms "from the smallest microbe to man, have to self adjust to environment to survive . . . to keep the entire organism in balance, and counteract influences, . . . without this ability no living organism could survive . . ."

Edward Maisel, author, Harvard and Princeton trained physical rehabilitation expert and lecturer, suggests in his book that the "slow, warming up" process of Tai chi will help prevent many freak injuries, enable one to sleep well and aid those who are overweight (a most important factor considering there are upwards of 30,000,000 American who are extremely obese.)

It is because Tai-chi is deliberately paced slow and evenly that many prominent physicians have recommended it as a preventive discipline in the matter of certain heart ailments.

CHAPTER FIVE
TAI CHI AND THE MARTIAL ARTS

The student's gradual involvement with Tai-chi is aided by the fact that the postures, and the movements within them, become more complex as they progress. Maisel and Mr. Liu divide the Tai-chi postures into three sections. They both agree that each section may be performed as an entity. As the student becomes more disciplined, more able to concentrate solely on his performance, he will be able to complete all three. The last of the series contains the more complicated movements. However, it is not necessary for the beginner to feel distraught if he does not go on to all three as soon as he might like.

Mr. Eugene Linn, who posed for the first two groups, which are reproduced here, was not able to go on to the third. And he has been diligently practicing Tai-chi for more than a year. What is important is that he benefits, not so much from the extent of his proficiency in Tai-chi, but from the diligence and habit of his practicing the various forms.

It had been the original intention of the editors and publishers of this book to refrain from commenting on the martial aspects of Tai-chi, except to mention they exist. However, in view of the popular attention being paid the number of Oriental disciplines such as Kung Fu and Karate, more than just a few words on the subject appear to be in order.

During the course of being photographed, the eighty year old Mr. Liu was asked, during a break, whether he could very simply demonstrate the defense aspects of Tai-chi. With a smile the aged (but not aging) Mr. Liu asked the photographer's assistant, a Karate trained young man in his early twenties, to approach him as if to attack. He did. Rythmically, effortlessly, without strain or change of expression, Mr. Liu began bending his body backward, the assistant coming forward. In what was actually a fraction of a second, Mr. Liu lightly touched the younger man, who went spilling forward, caught by Mr. Liu before he hit the floor. What had been demonstrated, of course, was the perfect control of bodily balance. It was this use of equilibrium which enabled Mr. Liu to make the offensive attack futile. Tam Gibbs, a student and associate of Cheng Man-ching tells of the time he was walking along the street and sensed that someone was following him. As he wrote, "Quickly shifting my weight and moving my shoulders away, I realized a split second later that a fellow member of the Association had tried to slap me on the back. Because I had moved out of the way of his swiftly descending hand he had lost his balance. . .My spontaneous reaction prevented me from being soundly slapped on the back without warning. It had been intuitive. . .By relaxing and loosening the entire system, it (Tai-chi) enables one to sense the minutest warning from his nervous system and to act without hesitation in response to the slightest stimulus. Tai-chi Ch'uan is an exercise of a person's sensitivity."

For it is as Chang San-feng wrote during the 13th century, "When there is up, there must be down, when there is forward, there must be a backward movement; when there

is a left, there must be a right. If the idea is to move upward, hold in your mind at the same time the idea there must be a downward return. For, if upon lifting an opposing force you add the idea of pushing it down, the root of your opposition is broken, and without a doubt you will quickly overcome it. . .When opportunities and conditions of strength are not grasped, the body will become scattered and put in disarray. Then the fault must be looked for in the legs and in the waist. Up or down, backward or forward, right or left, one must guard against this fault in all movements."

Edward Maisel quotes Chang San-feng's pupil Wang Chung-yueh who probably lived during the early fourteenth century. Wang told how he responded to attack, "When the other's movement comes quickly, I respond quickly. When the other's movement comes slowly, I follow slowly. In a myriad of changing situations, the principle is the same."

What is immediately apparent is that the very same principle of continuity of rythm in movement is carried into one's reaction against an opponent. Wang was concerned with the ability to be fluid in one's movements, not to be rooted to the ground when the weight is evenly distributed. By shifting the center of gravity it is more easy for one to shift as the situation demands.

Wang told of the many techniques of combat. "Whatever their differences they all nevertheless rely upon the strong to overcome the weak, and the slow to give in to the fast."

Tai-chi, however, is most valuable as a defensive weapon because it does not rely on strength. Wang continued, "But as far as the strong beating the weak, the slow giving in to the fast, such things derive from natural abilities and do not have to be studied. When 'four ounces move a thousand pounds' it is obviously not a matter of strength When an old man can withstand many young men, how can it be through an accomplishment of speed?"

Our young photographer's assistant found in short order

that was true.

Not withstanding the fact that 'ch'uan' means 'fist' Tai-chi Ch'uan as a form of combat involves use of the entire body, of which the fist is just one small part.

Cheng and Robert Smith in their book have this to say on the subject of defense: "Stand like a balance and move actively like a cartwheel. Keep your weight sunk on one side. If it is spread on two feet you will be pushed over easily. Co-ordinating the substantial is the key here. If that is achieved, then you can interpret strength. . ."

What all experts and teachers agree on in the effective application of Tai-chi in combat is the ability to anticipate, or rather interpret one's opponent's strength. In much the manner of Gibbs' ability to sense that someone was going to touch him, the proficient student of Tai-chi will react out of reflex, without thought as to why, but rather because his senses are finely tuned.

As Charlotte Curtis wrote in the *New York Times*, "Tai-chi Ch'uan, which to the untutored eye appears to be a form of modern or interpretative dancing, is one of the most complicated kinds of exercise. The flick of an eyelash, the crook of a little finger or the point of a toe not only has meaning, but also was planned."

And an integral part of the planning, insofar as defense is concerned, is to totally cordinate the mind and the body into one intuitively disciplined unit. That's total defense, too.

The study of Tai-chi is for many a beginning, not an end in itself. Few westerners seriously contemplate *that* time in the distant future when they will sit, meditate and contemplate the various postures of Tai-chi. But many westerners are only too much aware of the debilitative forces of modern society on their lives. With all the justifiable concern with waste of land and natural resources there should be

an equal concern with the waste of the individual. This may be due, in part to the pace and pressures of society. Today's demands are taking their toll in forcing some men and women to drugs and other unnatural escapes. While Tai-chi Ch'uan may not be the total answer to the tense state of the individual, it can, without, any medical controversy, act as a salutary influence on one's daily pressures.

We had observed the students at a number of Tai-chi classes. They came from all walks of life, from all economic classes. Some were more wrapped up in the efficacy of Tai-chi than others. But all agree that studying Tai-chi, taking it seriously enough, can make one day less tense, more pleasant, and make all else that man might enjoy more available.

There are many schools of Tai-chi, some jealousies perhaps. We take no sides. We do know that Tai-chi can help the individual—and with a common sense approach, there's no reason why it may not help you, too!!

CHAPTER SIX THE MOVEMENTS

Behind all the movements in Tai-chi Ch'uan is the principle that no energy should be an end in itself. Each movement flows into the next. As the movements progress at a constant pace or tempo, the practicioner is able to control them. And, rather than using up energy, he will be able to conserve it. However, these movements are not to be performed automatically, but with an exclusive awareness of what one is doing. The movements are circular. They are performed in those motions which, if completed, would form a circle, such as arcs and curves. Not only does this create the feeling of continuity but induces a feeling of calm.

In all the movement, one should stay calm and sure, feet planted firmly, moving fluidly but firmly. When you move slowly, you can concentrate more fully on what you are doing.

In the close-up pictures on these two pages note the way the feet are planted firmly on the floor, the gentle manner in which the body bends from the waist. The hands fall naturally, fingers are gently curled, not tense at all. When the knees are bent, it should be done so that it does not cause any strain or tension. When a hand is raised, the fingers

should curve and fall naturally.

The Tai-chi fist is not what you would experience in boxing. It is loose, free of tautness. There is no clenching.

Notice, too, the movement of the face and eyes as they follow the outstretched arms. Remember, too, that the movements are performed simultaneously. While one hand is stretched out, and the other is bent; they do so in the characteristic circular motion.

There are some postures in which the position of the hands is likened to holding a large ball. You can sense this feeling, where the two hands appear as if they are pushing against an empty force. No contradiction in terms this, because it is the absence of force that permits the student of Tai-chi to counteract the real force.

When you practice Tai-chi at home, by yourself, it should not be thought as an exhibition or as a contest. The fundamental purpose of Tai-chi Ch'uan is to make a better life for you, so that you may achieve a more harmonious balance between mind and body.

If you can be helped to achieve the inner peace which will help you live the world's turmoil, then indeed the practice of Tai-chi will have been worthwhile.

As we mentioned before, Tai-chi is deceptively simple to look at—but of course it is really not that easy, especially for those who have been in the habit of keeping muscles tense, and when exercising, often do it to exhaustion.

As Mr. Liu explained, the complete performance of all the Tai-chi postures will move the individual in a complete circle, so that he will, while completing the total postures (not the sixteen just noted) face the eight major points of the compass.

In a speech delivered to the Downtown Senior Citizens Center at the Palo Alto Public Library in California, Mr. Liu noted, after a demonstration: "The purpose of this exercise (Tai-chi Ch'uan) is to condition the mind by exercising the body and to exercise the body under motivation of the mind —to train the body without strain and to tend the mind without tension. The whole course of this exercise comprises 93 postures or forms (*Ed. Note: Some Grand Masters indicate 108 to 128 postures. The discrepancy is usually accounted for by the fact that some postures are combined and others are repeated*) including 52 repetitions and takes about 20 to 25 minutes to finish.

"You may either practice the whole course or any part of it according to your convenience and endurance, but in order to achieve lasting benefits, you must make it a daily task. . .

". . .each posture involved 2 to 6 movements by shifting the body weight from one leg to the other, raising and lowering of the body, moving it forward and backward, flexing and twisting it right and left, with eyes following and concentrating and all limbs collaborating and balancing. All parts of the body acted in perfect unison, blending one posture into another in a continuous, rythmical succession throughout without any lapse of time and sequence. All movements were executed concentrically toward the axis of the waist with the spine held as erect as a post. . .

". . .During the performance you will have to relax your mind and concentrate on your act at all times. . .There is no eway to concentrate your mind for relaxation other than engaging it on something of special interest. . .According to Göster Olander (Norwegian coach and trainer) who had also advanced the idea of slow motion exercise. . .conventional muscle building with mechanical aid is meaningless because training is not only bodily exertion but also mental preparation; the ultimate springs of physical performance are not in the muscles but in the mind."

Mr. Liu puts great store in Olander. He often refers to his belief that "Training is not only bodily exertion but mental preparation. . .Exercise must be directed at helping nature."

As Liu recalls, Olander believed that man's nervous system is fighting a losing battle. The Scandinavian's once unorthodox views are gaining great credence when it has been demonstrated that nerve and muscle relaxation is essential to efficient human performance.

Mr. Liu, who demonstrated many of the postures for this book, was accompanied to the studio by a pupil who must have been fifty years younger. Mr. Linn, who has been practicing Tai-chi for a year, could not continue throughout the entire series. Mr. Liu demonstrated them over and over, not losing a breath, his pulse remaining steady. He explained this was due to the fact that he knew how to breathe, how to discipline his thoughts, and that he was at no time over-extending himself.

There is no question that Mr. Liu was in the most remarkable condition, mentally and physically, not just for a man of his age, but for a man of any age.

BASIC MOVEMENTS FOR BEGINNERS

1. Lower body in two bending legs (Shoulder breadth)
2. Lower body on two bending legs. (Double shoulder breadth)
3. Move body from one bending leg to another, sidewise, alternating movements.
4. Repeat No. 3, but twist waist while performing movement.
5. Alternate moving body from one bending leg to the other. Front movement.
6. Alternate moving body from one bending leg to other. Diagonal movement.
7. Alternately standing on each leg.
8. Kicking foot with toes forward. Alternate each leg.
9. As above, but with heels in forward position.
10. Kick foot with toes sideward. Alternate legs.
11. As above, but with heels sideward.
12. Squat with buttock resting on back of heels.
13. Sit on one bending leg. Alternate legs until four postures are completed.
14. Forward step in zig-zag movement.
15. Backward step in zig-zag movement.
16. Bend forward so that both palms touch the ground without bending knees.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

In researching and interviewing the various exercises as performed in the past and present, a number of variations were found. Interestingly the Chinese ideograph which translates as 'posture' also may mean 'form.' These words are interchangeable. We have used 'movement' to describe the intermediary steps of the posture. The beginning student should not be so much concerned with the variations of the postures as with the principles of Tai-chi, about which there is little discrepancy.

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PART TWO
THE POSTURES

The following postures are divided into three groups: Beginners, Intermediate and Advanced. The complete sequence of pictures of the movements begins on page 35. We believe you will be able to use a combination of the text and picture sequence as an aid in performing the various Tai-chi postures. You should remember, what cannot be seen in the still photos are the slow continuous movements which carry from one position to another. Also, it is more important that the student, especially the beginner, select those postures he can perform on a regular basis in order to achieve the most benefit from Tai-chi. And lastly, no text can replace a good teacher. But a clear text can make studying Tai-chi more understandable. The first movement of each posture is shown for identification.

BEGINNERS' GROUP

Posture 1.

The Beginning

There are three basic movements: (1) Up-down, (2) Leftward, and (3) Rightward. Stand facing the north. Your feet should be parallel, head held straight, without strain. You begin by raising your arms slowly, holding them forward, until they are at shoulder height. Fingers should be kept relaxed, naturally hanging with the palms down. Then lower hands toward knees as they, in turn, bend as the body is lowered. When returning to the erect position, be sure the feet remain parallel. Lift arms naturally. In all movements to the left and right the body shifts its weight in the opposite direction in order to maintain balance.

Posture 2.
Grasp Bird's Tail

Consists of four basic movements: (1) Ward off, (2) Pull Back, (3) Press forward, and (4) Push. Shift weight to left leg. Keep body relaxed. Turn on left heel, facing right. Bend left leg, shifting body weight. To get feel of arms, pretend you are holding a large ball. Gently shift weight as you change direction. Your eyes should face the same direction as your body, all the while you will complete a circular motion. When turning on your heel, be sure to keep it bent slightly inward.

Posture 3.
Single Whip

As you turn your head north, shift weight to your left foot. Turn on right heel, holding toes in without strain. Arms are parallel and slightly bent, held out shoulder length apart. Weight is shifted to right leg, turning body direction. Right hand is withdrawn and then extended over right leg, holding fingers close, but still pointing down. It is important, that the body and arms turn with the movement of the foot. Arms are always slightly curved, palms held down.

Posture 4.

Raise Hands and Step Up

As you turn on left foot, body weight shifts to opposite side of body. Note open position of palms, right foot extending north, lowering of right hand and extension of left, palm out. As arm is lowered, it is done in a backward circling motion. Before any forward step is made, the other foot should be set firmly so the moving of the foot can be performed in a slow manner.

Posture 5.

Stork Cools Its Wings

Note particularly how both knees are bent in the second picture in the series. The change of toe position must be done without strain, and only as it feels comfortable. The direction of the palms of each hand is different for this posture. The weight is shifted from side to side, so that the extended movements of the legs will always keep the body in balance.

Posture 6.
Brush Knee and Twist Step
(Leftward Movement)

When arms are held in toward body repeat the simulation of holding a large ball. As left foot is moved forward, the right hand is lowered, lightly brushing past right knee. Later there is a reverse of the movement of hands and legs. The intermediary movements indicate the turning of the body direction, all the while shifting weight to keep in balance. Eyes follow direction of torso.

Posture 7.
Play the Fiddle

Upward step with the right foot with right knee slightly bent and weight shifting to it. Forward movement with the opposite foot, toe raised. Right arm descends as left arm is raised over left foot. Arms do not touch as they move simultaneously. The palms of each hand face each other, but are not opposite. In this posture the body should be facing west, or to the side.

Posture 8.
Brush Knee and Twist Step
(Leftward movement)

Right hand moves in a circular motion. In the full completion of this posture the body will first face southwest and, as it is repeated later, will face the four complementary points on the compass. It is particularly important to keep the body firm and not tip over. Also, arms always move in circular motions, even when slightly bent. Use the shoulder as the focus of the movement.

Posture 9.

Brush Knee and Twist Step
(Rightward movement)

Turns are made on the heel of the foot as the body turns. While you bend your left knee the right is held straight. The right arm moves west, in line with the right shoulder, with the palm facing in the same direction, wrist at the same level as the shoulder. While doing this, the left arm is lowered before the left thigh, palm facing down. Both arm movements should be completed at the same time. By shifting weight, body will be kept in balance.

Posture 10.
Brush Knee and Twist Step (leftward)
This is a repeat of Posture 8.*

Posture 11.
Play the Fiddle
This is a repeat of Posture 7.

Posture 12.
Brush Knee and Twist Step (left)
This is a repeat of Posture 8.

*Note: Repeats are indicated as part of the performance of the entire sequence of postures.

Posture 13.

Step Up, Deflect Downward, Parry and Punch

The formation of the fist (ch'uan) is with the middle knuckle extending slightly beyond the other three. Thumb on top, hand slightly bending down. Weight shifts to opposite foot as right foot bends slightly, toes outward. Notice position of hands when right leg is crossed over left as body balance is maintained. The sense of this posture is that the student's body balance acts as a defense against any onward attack. By constantly shifting weight, balance is maintained. Arms raise and lower in circular motions.

Posture 14.

Apparent Close Up

Hands are crossed as they move upward with the left wrist crossing the right. Note, when the left leg is slightly bent and body weight shifts, toes are forward, right hand hanging loosely as left is bent with palms of both hands held in. At conclusion, hands held forward, not stiff but loose, palms up, gently pushing away from body.

Posture 15.
Cross Hands.

As body is drawn back, weight is shifted to the right foot. Hands extended east and west, then a gentle shifting with left leg slightly bent. When hands are brought up over the chest, the palms should face in, right hand crossed over the left, body facing north, eyes forward. Arms will later lower slowly to beginning position.

END OF BEGINNERS' GROUP

INTERMEDIATE GROUP

Posture 16.

Carry Tiger To Mountain (diagonally)

Weight is shifted to the left foot. As the right hand is slowly raised it brushes past the right leg, holding the palm down as the hand is raised. While the right leg is bent, the left leg is stretched out, feet remaining parallel. When direction is changed, turn on the sole of the foot. As the right hand is moved it forms a circle, with the hand never going above eye level.

Posture 17.

Grasp Bird's Tail (diagonally)

There are three basic movements: (1) Pull back, (2) Press forward, and (3) Push. The right hand is moved under the left elbow, with the left hand raised, palm facing forward. Weight is shifted to left foot as right leg is raised. Lowering leg and shifting weight to right leg, left is pushed back, left hand held forward, parallel to ground. When you reach the final movement both hands should be raised parallel to the ground, palms forward pushing against an invisible object—but without force or strain, with the weight gradually shifted to the right leg.

Posture 18.

Single Whip (diagonally)

The bulk of your weight is shifted to the left foot, as you turn on your right heel. Arms are held out parallel to the ground, slightly crooked. Then weight is shifted to the outer foot, mirroring the first movement. As you raise left arm, hand is held loose, pointing down. Right arm is held across chest, palm facing in, and left leg extended back. This posture concludes as you stretch both arms and legs, feet held parallel, arms slightly bent, with palms facing forward.

Posture 19.
Fist Under Elbow

Pull your body back. As you do this, shift the weight to your right foot. In one continuous motion arms are raised, left hand slightly higher than right, palms out, fingers loose and naturally curved. At the same time the right foot is raised, holding the knee at a slight angle, then slowly lowered as hands descend to complete the posture.

Posture 20.

Step Back and Repulse Monkey

There are two distinct turns in this posture. First to the left and then to the right, then repeated. As the weight is shifted to the right foot, the right fist is slightly opened, left hand raised, palm facing forward. There is a slight step to the rear, right foot forward, as the right hand is lowered, then the arms alternate and the weight is shifted to the other legs, as they change position. The hand is raised past the ear and moved to a forward position as the posture is completed.

Posture 21.
Slanting Flying

Right hand is thrust forward with palm up as the left leg With the weight shifted to the left foot, the right foot moves back as the right hand is thrust forward with the palm up. The left hand is raised, with palm eye-level, and facing out, fingers naturally curved forward. The turn around movement you see in the next picture is accomplished with a shifting of weight from one foot to the other. The movements are complex and, as you follow the pictures, remember these are reverse images (not mirror reflections). Notice the direction of the eyes, the position of the arms and legs.

Posture 22.
Raise Hands and Step Up
Repeat Posture 4.

Posture 23.
Stork Cool Its Wings
Repeat Posture 5.

Posture 24.
Brush Knee & Twist Step (leftward)
Repeat Posture 6.

Posture 25.
Needle At Sea Bottom

With the weight shifted to the right foot, the left is raised, loosely bent at a slight angle to the right, with left hand at your side, the right is raised simultaneously. Then, in a continuing movement, the right leg is lowered and the left leg is moved backward, slightly bent, with the weight shifting to the left leg, body bending forward, hands lowering near parallel, palms facing each other.

Posture 26.

Fan Through the Back

As the left leg is moved forward the right is drawn back, toes at approximately a 45° angle. At the same time both arms raise, slowly and continuously until palms are at eye level, facing outward. To complete the posture, reverse the movements. It is important that these deceptively simple movements be done slowly.

Posture 27.

Turn and Chop Opponent With Fist

Within this form the body moves in a slow circular motion. From the position of the arms held slightly bent and upward, they move down as the body turns at the waist, weight shifting to the left foot and then back to the right. What is important, and what takes constant practice, is the concurrent movement of the body, arms and legs, concluding with both arms held forward, hands held as fists, not tightly but loose.

Posture 28.
Step Up, Deflect Downward, Parry & Punch
Repeat Posture 13.

Posture 29.
Step Up, Grasp Bird's Tail
Repeat Posture 2.

Posture 30.
Single Whip
Repeat Posture 3.

Posture 31.

Wave Hands Like Clouds

In the beginning movement the weight is shifted to the left leg as it moves forward, slightly bent. Note that the feet are parallel, the right hand raised, hand at shoulder level, palms down, fingers loose. The left hand will be brought up from the side. All movements are circular. The arms, body, and change of position are done naturally and slowly.

Posture 32.
Single Whip

Masters vary as to the precise movements within the various postures or forms. In this variation the change from the position in the first picture to the second is done simultaneously. That is, the left leg is extended backward, the right hand moves up. Hold palm down as left hand is crossed over chest, fingers pointing up. Then change direction. Turn is made on right foot with palm of left hand up and forward, right hand, loose and down.

Posture 33.
High Pat On Horse

The right hand swings up toward the chest with the palm facing front. Note the position of the arm and fist on the left hand, the slight bend of the knees, then the straightening of the right leg. What you have here is a more subtle shifting of weight and slow movement of the arms and hands. Here the forward and backward steps are slight, performed, as usual with as little effort as possible, with both feet firmly planted on floor.

Posture 34.

Separation of Right Foot

As you shift your weight to the rear, the left foot is moved and set down. The right hand is raised, palm facing outward, bent over the raised right knee. The hand is held chin high. When in this position, circle the right hand slowly in a clockwise direction. The combination of the bent right hand and the weight shifted to the left foot will keep the body in balance.

Posture 35.

Separation of Left Foot

Following directly from the preceding posture, bring your feet down and together. Weight is shifted to right foot, as left foot is raised and hands, at same time are bent at elbows and raised, palms out, fingers naturally curved. As left arm is lowered, left leg is bent, toes pointing out. As your left leg is lowered to the floor, your arms circle and cross, before being lowered to the side.

Posture 36.

Turn and Kick With Foot

Right foot is firmly planted on the floor, with weight shifted to it. Right leg is raised, bringing knee to waist level. When the right hand is raised circle it in a counter-clockwise motion. Hold the left hand bent with palm facing forward. The left leg is kicked forward heel first. Eyes look over your left hand. The position of the hands is most important in maintaining balance.

Posture 37.
Brush Knee & Twist Step (Left)
Repeat Posture 8.

Posture 38.
Brush Knee & Twist Step (right)
Repeat Posture 9.

Posture 39.
Step Up & Punch Downward

When following the series of movements in this posture, watch especially for the following: The position of the toes, the fact that the foot is thrust forward, heel first; the arms are brought up in a circular motion when the hands are crossed (as seen in the fifth picture in the series); the spread of the fingers; and, as the posture concludes, the shifting of weight and spread of the hands which enable one to keep the body and balance, though the left foot is raised and extended.

Posture 40.
Turn and Chop Opponent With Fist
Repeat of Posture 27.

Posture 41.
Step Up, Deflect Downward, Parry & Punch
Repeat Posture 13.

Posture 42.

Right Foot Kicks Upward

The positions of the hands and legs are easily duplicated from what you see in the picture. What must be kept in mind is that the kick is made with forward thrust of the heel. The position of the arms, in relation to the body, especially the bend of the left hand, contribute to maintaining balance. The weight is shifted to the right leg. Both palms face outward, with the left hand at neck level and the right hand at eye level.

Posture 43.
Hit Tiger At Left

The movements of the arms and legs are done simultaneously. The left foot is moved forward as the right hand is raised to the waist and the left hand as high as the forehead. Both hands make loose fists, with the right hand palm in and left hand palm out. When the movement is to the next posture, shift the legs and weight and change the position of the hands.

Posture 44.

Hit Tiger at Right

This posture is essentially a direct reflection of the preceding posture. You can change from No. 43 to this one with a gradual shifting of the weight from the left to the right foot. When you conclude the posture your right hand will be at forehead level, with loose fist, facing out and right hand at waist level with loose fist, facing in. The two postures should be done in conjuntion with each other.

Posture 45.
Right Foot Kicks Upward
Repeat Posture 42.

Posture 46.

Strike Opponent's Ears With Both Fists

The weight shifts forward. First the left knee is slightly bent and arms move simultaneously. The left arm raised to the forehead, hand in slight fist, facing outward, right hand at waist level, then raised so both are at eye level with palms facing out. The change in weight emphasis and direction is performed in a slow, continuous movement. The two pictures not only show a change of direction but indicate, first, disparate movements of the hands, and then similar movements, remembering that all movements of limbs and body are circular.

Posture 47.
Left Foot Kicks Upward

What is important here is to remember that the kicking is done by pushing the heel forward, not the toe as is customary. The combination of the weight shifting to the right foot and the equal bend of the arms, with both palms facing out will keep the body in balance. In extending the left foot and raising the arms, the movements are done at the same time, slowly.

Posture 48.

Turn and Kick Right Foot

In going from the preceding posture to this one there is a shift in body weight from the right foot to the left foot. In actuality, this is a reversal of the posture you had just completed. Note the similarity in the position of the arms and palms of the hands. As you bring down the left foot in the previous posture you shift body weight to take you into this form.

Posture 49.
Step Up, Deflect Downward, Parry & Punch
Repeat Posture 13.

Posture 50.
Apparent Close Up
Repeat Posture 14.

Posture 51.
Cross Hands
Repeat Posture 15.

END OF INTERMEDIATE GROUP

ADVANCED GROUP

Posture 52.

Carry Tiger To Mountain (horizontally)

This form involves left and right movements. The first four movements indicate the start of the posture. Notice particularly the slight bend in the knees as the arms raise and hands cross. The next four pictures indicate the first turn as the hands part. The weight shifts to the heel of the turning foot and, as the body turns for the final move, there would have been completed a half circle turn of the entire body.

Posture 53.

Grasp Bird's Tail (horizontally)

This posture follows right from the preceding one. The right leg moves forward. The arms are held forward parallel and loose, palms out, then as the turn is made, the left arm is lowered and arm raised to chin level while the right hand is extended with palm down, fingers hanging loosely.

Posture 54.

Single Whip (horizontal)

In a continuum of movement from the preceding posture, spread the arms, right palm down, left palm up, then slightly bending right knee, left leg extended. Draw legs together so they are parallel, at the same time bringing arms in, crossing each other over chest, right hand under left elbow. With arms thus held, put weight on left leg. Bend from waist.

Posture 55.

Partition of Wild Horse's Mane

There are two basic side movements, to the right and the left which are repeated. Holding the body erect from the waist up, extend the left leg back and slight bend in the right. Left arm at side coming up past thigh, with right arm forward. Mr. Liu here demonstrates the typical circular movement of Tai-chi, which is effectively accomplished if one is sure to shift weight as turns are made.

Posture 56.
Grasp Bird's Tail

In a sense this posture begins where Posture 55 ends, with the last two movements the end of one, and the beginning of the next. The arms, during this posture, move in an arc-like direction, as if they are pushing an invisible body of air, but without force. The movements are slow, rhythmic and have been specifically delineated by Mr. Liu.

Posture 57.
Single Whip

The left foot steps forward with the weight shifting to it. The arms are raised in a circular motion. The fingers are held close together. When the body turns, an adjustment has to be made in the shifting of weight from one foot to the other.

Posture 58.

Turn and Chop Opponent With Fist

What you have here is essentially the simulation of a pushing motion with the weight initially on the right foot, the turn made on the right heel. Then as you can see, in the fifth picture the weight is shifted to the left foot, the pushing motion continuing, the body turning as the posture is completed. Note specifically the position of the palms, and the upper torso as well as direction of the face.

Posture 59.

Fair Lady Works At Shuttles

Following directly from the preceding posture, the weight is shifted to the right foot, body turning and arms raising simultaneously. Notice, when the elbows are bent they point downward. The arms are crossed, right over left, palms up. Be observant of the position of the feet, where they are parallel and where they are at angles to each other. When the posture is concluded you will have turned a half circle and ready to go into the next form.

Posture 60.
Slanting Flying

The left foot is moved forward as the left arm raises, right hand just below waist level, with palm down. Palm of left hand facing in. Then as weight shifts to right foot, body turned, left hand lowers as right raises until they are parallel.

Posture 61.

Grasp Bird's Tail

There are three parts to this posture. They are shown in the following groupings. (1) Pictures 1-4, (2) Pictures 5-6, (3) Pictures 7-12. You will note that the body moves in a circular movement with the first turn made with the weight on the left foot and then shifting to the right foot for the last section. As the arms swing up they push forward, concluding as they had begun, only facing in the opposite direction.

Posture 62
Single Whip
This is a repeat of Posture 57.

Posture 63
Wave Hands Like Clouds
This is a repeat of Posture 31.

Posture 64
Single Whip
This is a repeat of Posture 57.

Posture 65.
Snake Creeps Down

This complex movement is shown in more explicit detail so that you can all but sense the loose, free feeling, the baby-like limpness as seen in the third picture. However the torso is always held firm. Notice carefully the varying position of the palms, the shifting of weight to the forward foot. And when the arms are raised or lowered, they are done so in a continuing circular motion. The outward position of the hand and extension of the opposite foot will keep the body in balance.

Posture 66.

Golden Cock Standing On One Leg

This form is deceptive because it employs a combination of weight balance and stylistic discipline. Note the downward pointing of the left toe, and left hand raised with palm facing in. The right arm hanging at the side, the palm in, going past thigh. If you feel a strain in your right leg, then stop. Do not hold this posture if you feel tense. You can master it with practice.

Posture 67.

Step Back and Repulse Monkey

In this there is a continuing rolling movements of arms, legs and body. There is a similarity to the pantomime of a man walking, but the movement is indicated by a roll of the body, rather than actually moving the legs. You will notice that, as Mr. Liu turns, the palms of the hands change direction. When the weight is shifted to the left foot the left arm is bent, palm held face high, as right hand is extended to keep body in balance. As the posture concludes, the weight is on the left foot, both elbows bent, right foot back, face forward.

Posture 68.
Slanting Flying

This is a repeat of Posture 21, earlier demonstrated by Mr. Linn, Mr. Liu's student for the past year. In this series, Mr. Liu shows the subtlety of ability after years of practice.

Posture 69.

Raise Hands and Step Up

The weight is shifted to the right foot. There is a slight turn on the left heel. The kick is with the right foot, weight on left foot, arms bent at elbows across chest to maintain balance. Then right foot is lowered, left foot extended to the rear. Bend slightly from the waist as hands are crossed slightly below waist level. Then in a circular motion, raise right hand, with elbow bent. Turning on left heel will take you into next posture.

Posture 70

Stork Cools Its Wings

The weight on the right foot, right knee bent. Then weight is shifted to the left foot as turn is made on left heel, left arm raising and right hand lowering, torso remaining erect. It concludes with a shift of motion of the arms, the right bent at the elbow, palm face high, and out, left hand crossed across the chest with the palm facing down.

Posture 71.

Brush Knee and Twist Step (left)

The right hand is brought down in a circular motion as if pushing a large ball. Here the left leg is slightly bent. The posture is concluded by bringing up the left hand as if one were holding a ball underneath. When the hands are brought forward in a circular motion they come past the head at eye level in a smooth flowing movement.

Posture 72.
Needle At Sea Bottom

The weight is on the left foot. The right foot is slightly bent as it is moved forward. The body bends at the waist, both arms move forward toward left knee. Notice that while this movement is performed the head faces straight ahead as well as the position of the feet in relation to each other.

Posture 73.
Fan Through The Back

The symbolic discription is achieved by bending the left foot forward, at the same time both arms are raised, the left hand covering the face, the right just above ear level, both palms face forward. The palms are actually about shoulder length apart. The fingers are loose, naturally curved.

Posture 74.

Turn and Chop Opponent With Fist

Again Mr. Liu demonstrates with great facility what the younger Mr. Linn has only recently mastered, in Posture 27, as you will, too, with consistent practice.

Posture 75.

Step Up, Deflect, Downward, Parry and Punch

This is essentially the same as Posture 13. In checking the differences in the performance of the movements, notice Mr. Liu's freer use of his limbs. We thought it of interest to show you his attitude toward the movement.

Posture 76.

Step Up, Grasp Bird's Tail

This posture involves a complete turn of the body. Points to watch: the turn on the left toe, with the foot pulled back and on the right heel as that foot is extended. The arms come up in a circular forward sweep, with the palms out. The turn is made with the arms raised and parallel, following Mr. Liu's rather explicit pictures.

Posture 77.
Single Whip

Mr. Linn had performed this same form in Posture 32. Observe the side extension of the right foot by Mr. Liu. As this was done the arms were raised, fingers naturally bent and loose, the torso firm, the left knee slightly bent with the weight shifted to that leg.

Posture 78.
Wave Hands Like Clouds
Again, this is a repeat of an earlier Posture, No. 31.

Posture 79.
Single Whip

In this repetition of Posture 3, notice the more pronounced relaxation in Mr. Liu's form than in the younger Mr. Linn's. As the older man explained, one of the ways of achieving this is by complete concentration on the posture, to the exclusion of all other thoughts. This, as does the exercise itself, takes years of discipline and practice.

Posture 80.
High Pat On Horse

Compare this performance with Mr. Linn's in Posture 33. It was photographed to enable you to see another side of the same posture. As seen from the side view you are better able to observe the loose feeling of the palms, the fingers naturally curved down, and the turn from the waist, hands opening up, with palms up. Then the weight shifts to the left foot. The turn is made on the toe with the right hand thrust forward.

Posture 81.

White Snake Puts Out Tongue

Standing with feet parallel, move hands up until they cross in front of face. Weight shifts to left foot with same leg bent forward. Move arms in a circular motion until they fall to side. As you straighten legs, raise hand, bending at elbows, with palm out. You are ready to go into the next posture.

Posture 82.

Turn Around and Kick With Right Sole

Hands descend from upward position, in slow arc-like motion. Weight shifts to left foot as arms raise again. Feet draw together. Left hand crosses chest, palm in, right hand extended, then palms cross under face, right palm under left. Swing hands in circular motion as kick is made with right foot, heel forward, with weight on left foot, maintaining balance through shift of weight.

Posture 83.

Brush Knee and Punch Opponent

Note that left hand does brush by the left knee, as it is bent slightly forward, while the right hand makes a fist and the right arm is raised. Then the left arm is moved up in swinging motion, weight shifting to left leg which brings you into the next posture.

Posture 84.

Step Up Grasp Bird's Tail

This posture has been performed earlier in the series and now, with modifications, it follows the preceding movement. The hands are bent at the elbows, palms facing in. Then the hands push forward and down, palms down, weight shifting to right heel and left toe. Arms pull back, left leg draws back. Posture concludes with the feet parallel, left arm across chest, palm of hand in, right arm extended, hand face high, fingers naturally curving down and holding hands, shift weight to left foot and bend body forward from waist.

Posture 85.
Single Whip

This posture has been repeated earlier (by Mr. Linn as Posture 3 and Mr. Liu in Posture 79.) It is again demonstrated as a bridge between Postures 84 and 86. Notice the position of the arms and hands. They will descend in a circular motion, to take you into the next form.

Posture 86.
Snake Creeps Down
Repeat of Posture 65.

Posture 87.

Step Up To Form Seven Stars

Form fists with both hands. Body is straight but right foot is bent forward as weight shifts to it. Push arms forward crossing hands at wrists. Legs straighten and remain parallel as right arm bends at elbow, palm at forehead height. Right arm hangs loose at side. Lift left leg, as weight shifts to right foot. The combination of raised hand and lifted foot maintains balance. Slowly lower foot as lead-in to next posture.

Posture 88.
Retreat To Ride Tiger

Continuing from preceding form, right hand lowers and left raises until both are bent at waist level. Body turn is made on right heel and left toe. Then push forward and beneath with both hands. Pull hands back in circular motion, preparatory to next posture.

Posture 89.

Turn Around and Stand On One Leg

Beginning with the last movement of the preceding posture, lower the left foot slowly. Extend and turn the body from the waist, at the same time raising the arms and then lowering them to waist high, lifting the right leg and pushing forward, standing flat foot on left leg. Lower right leg, slightly bending at knee, raising hand to waist level, palms down, fingers loose.

Posture 90.

Draw Bow To Shoot Tiger

The body pulls back. Extend right foot forward, toe up, weight on left foot. Hands are raised, bent at elbow. Make a fist with each hand, then shift weight to right foot. Extend arms forward, opening fist. Shift weight to left foot, and maintain balance by extending and lifting right foot, bending right arm across chest.

Posture 91.

Step Up, Deflect Downward, Parry & Punch

This is a more experienced demonstration of Posture 13, which was performed by Eugene Linn. .Notice that the body and right arm make a circular motion, with the head facing the direction of the torso as it turns. The weight is first on the right foot, shifts to the left and back to the right as the posture concludes.

Posture 92.

Apparent Close Up

In effect this is a repeat of Posture 14, leading into naturally from the preceding posture. Note here the direction of the face, the position of the palms and how the straight torso maintains balance when the knees bend. The last movement of this posture is the first of the next.

Posture 93.
Cross Hands/Conclusion

Straightening up from the preceding posture, the arms are raised until the hands are crossed at the face, right hand over left. Arms are gently lowered to the sides, brushing past thighs, as knees slightly bend. Then the legs are straightened and hands are raised and lowered to remain at sides as they were in the first posture.

T'AI-CHI CH'UAN A VALUABLE PICTORIAL REFERENCE

On the following sixteen pages the venerable Mr. Liu and his much younger student, Eugene Linn, demonstrate the older man's 93 postures. You should be aware, in performing these postures, you repeat some of the exercises. This is necessary to affect a continuity of movement. Although some prominent instructors indicate 108 postures and others up to twenty more, Mr. Liu believes his grouping satisfies the intent of T'ai-chi. The steps taken to arrive at the conclusion of each posture are called movements. Obviously, in still pictures, it is impossible to show the graceful, slow movements in full detail. Mr. Liu's description of the movements bear repeating. ". . .The characteristic differences between T'ai-chi Ch'uan and systems of conventional exercises (are such that) T'ai-chi Ch'uan has four principal characteristics:

1. Movements are slow, light and effortless with rythmical sequence of body postures.

2. Movements of all parts of the body from head to feet are propelled simultaneously and continually.
3. Each movement is timed to pace with abdominal breathing.
4. Last . . .body and mind must be united and relaxed throughout, and the mind fully and constantly aware of each movement to the exclusion of all irrelevant thought."

We thought it only appropriate to repeat Mr. Liu's comments as an introduction to the picturization of the various postures. We are indebted to Mr. Liu and to Mr. Linn for their cooperation and assistance in both the performing and describing of the various movements and exercises. Neither they nor we suggest that the beginner will be able to totally satisfy his interest in Tai-chi from this or any other book. But we do feel that if the book does serve to interest one in searching out a teacher it will have served a useful purpose. Of course, once one has begun to study T'ai-chi, this book can become a most valuable reference guide in the performance and practice of T'ai-chi at home, or virtually any place one happens to be.

BEGINNER

POSTURE 1

POSTURE 2

POSTURE 3

POSTURE 4

POSTURE 5

POSTURE 6

POSTURE 7

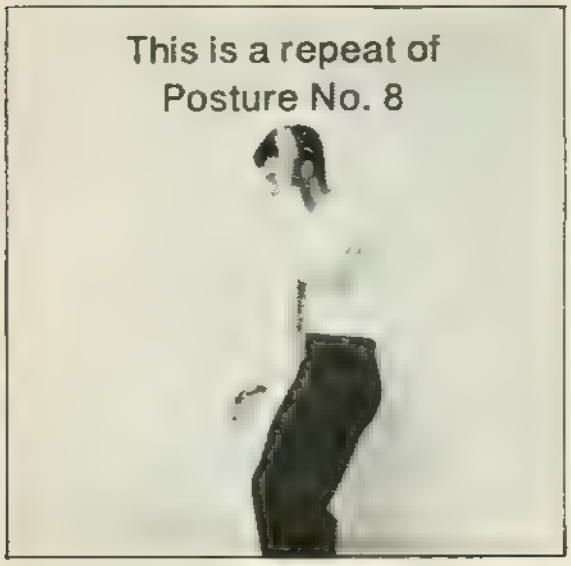
POSTURE 8

POSTURE 9

POSTURE 9 CONTINUED

POSTURE 10

This is a repeat of
Posture No. 8



POSTURE 11

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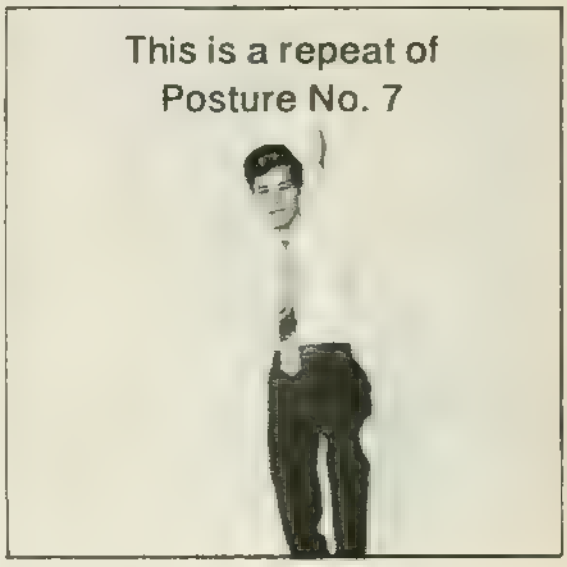

POSTURE 12

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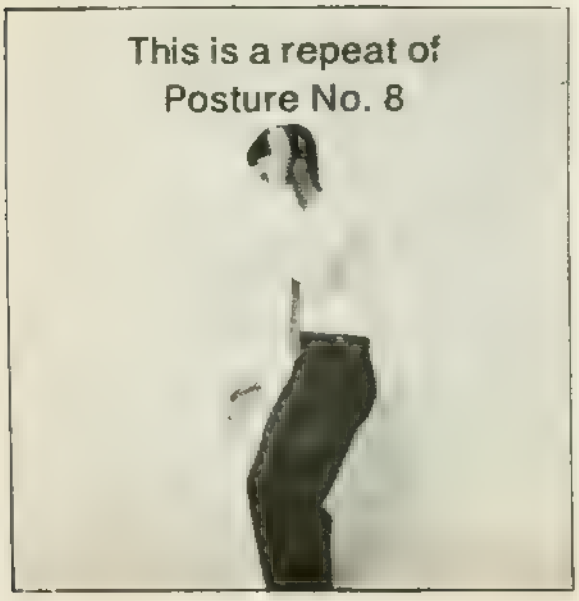


POSTURE 13

POSTURE 13 CONTINUED

POSTURE 14

POSTURE 15

INTERMEDIATE
POSTURE 16

POSTURE 17

POSTURE 18 CONTINUED

POSTURE 19

POSTURE 20

POSTURE 21

POSTURE 22

This is a repeat of
Posture No. 4

POSTURE 23

This is a repeat of
Posture No.5 .

POSTURE 24

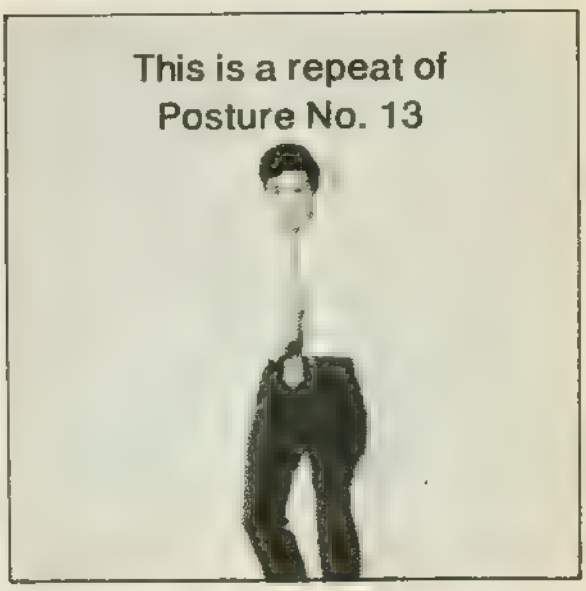
This is a repeat of
Posture No. 6

POSTURE 25

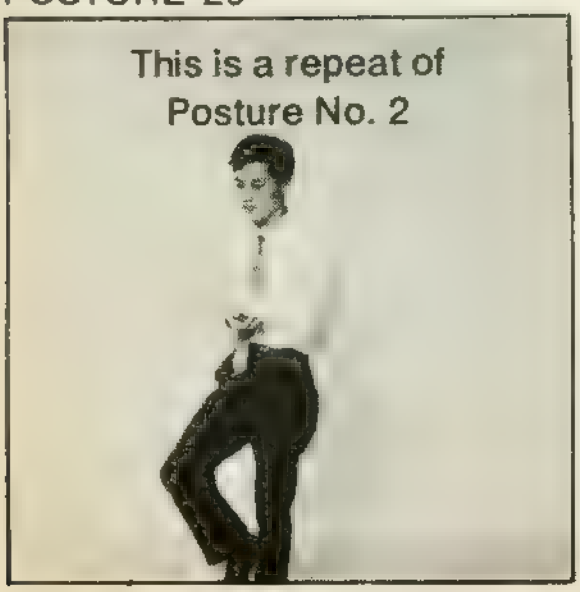
POSTURE 26

POSTURE 28

POSTURE 29



POSTURE 30



POSTURE 32

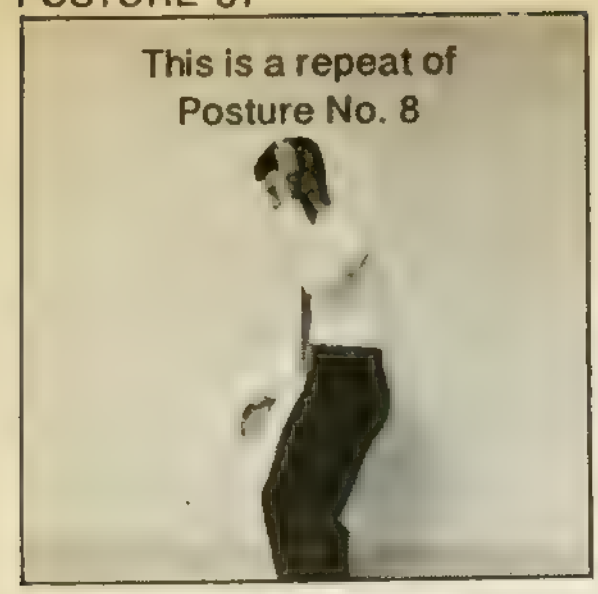
POSTURE 33

POSTURE 34

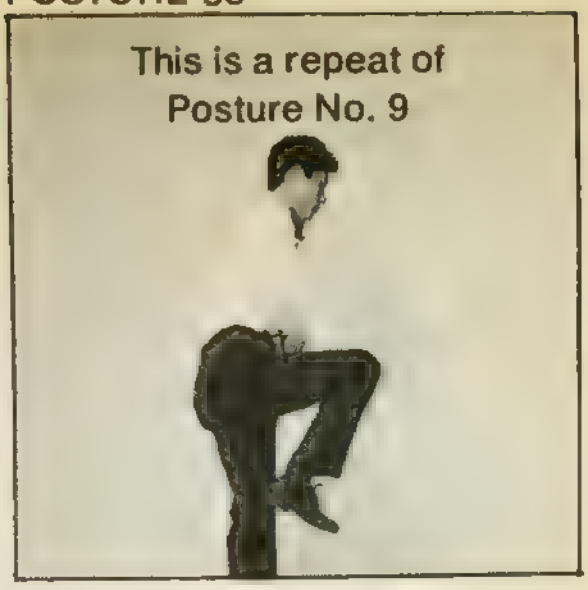
POSTURE 35

POSTURE 36

POSTURE 37



POSTURE 38



POSTURE 39

POSTURE 39 CONTINUED

POSTURE 40

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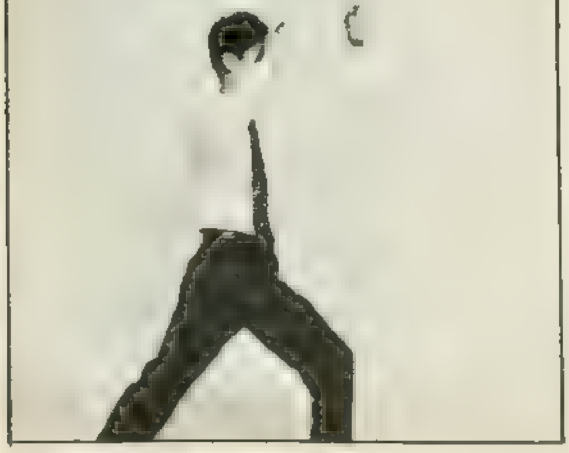

POSTURE 41

This is a repeat of
Posture No. 13

POSTURE 42

POSTURE 43

POSTURE 44

POSTURE 45

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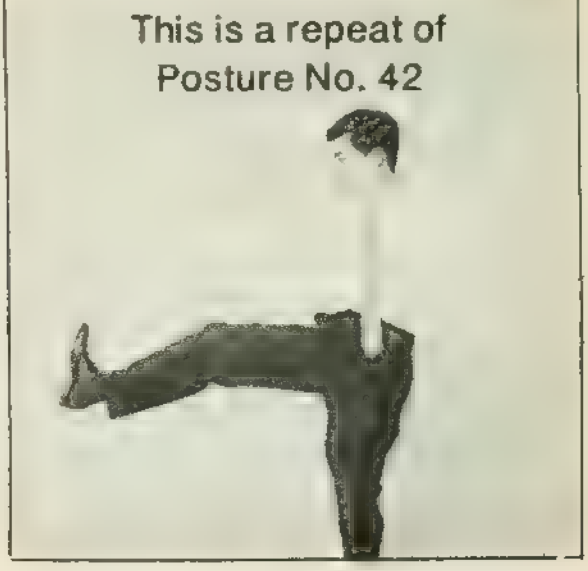
Posture No. 42



POSTURE 46

POSTURE 47

POSTURE 48

POSTURE 49

This is a repeat of
Posture No. 13

POSTURE 50

This is a repeat of
Posture No. 14

ADVANCED

POSTURE 51

This is a repeat of
Posture No. 15

POSTURE 52

POSTURE 52 CONTINUED

POSTURE 53

POSTURE 54

POSTURE 55

POSTURE 56

POSTURE 57

POSTURE 58

POSTURE 58 CONTINUED

POSTURE 59

POSTURE 60

POSTURE 60 CONTINUED

POSTURE 61

POSTURE 62

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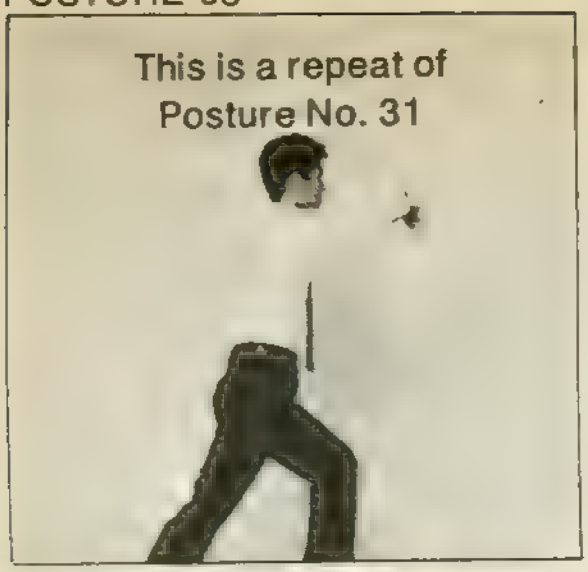
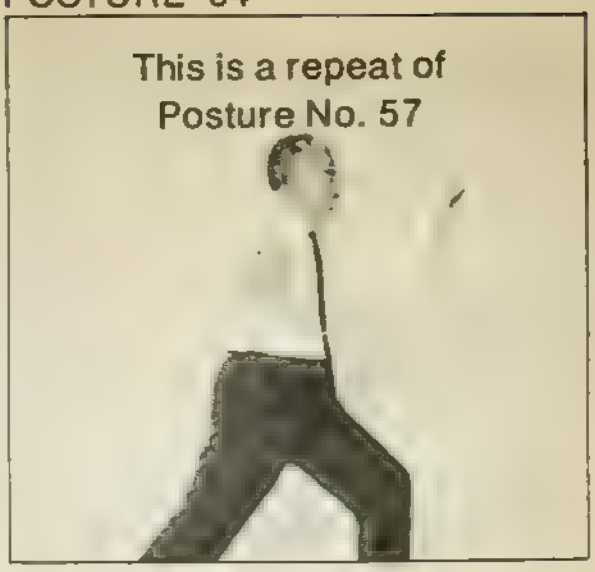
Posture No. 57

POSTURE 63



POSTURE 64



POSTURE 65

POSTURE 66

POSTURE 67

POSTURE 67 CONTINUED

POSTURE 68

POSTURE 68 CONTINUED

POSTURE 69

POSTURE 70

POSTURE 70 CONTINUED

POSTURE 71

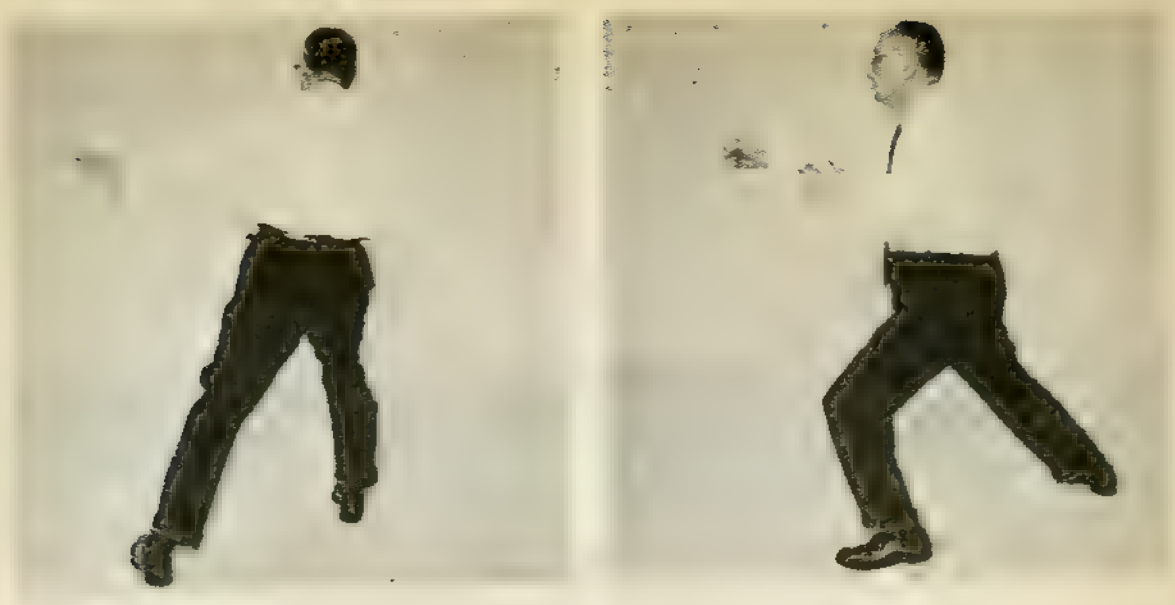
POSTURE 72

POSTURE 73

POSTURE 74

POSTURE 75

POSTURE 75 CONTINUED

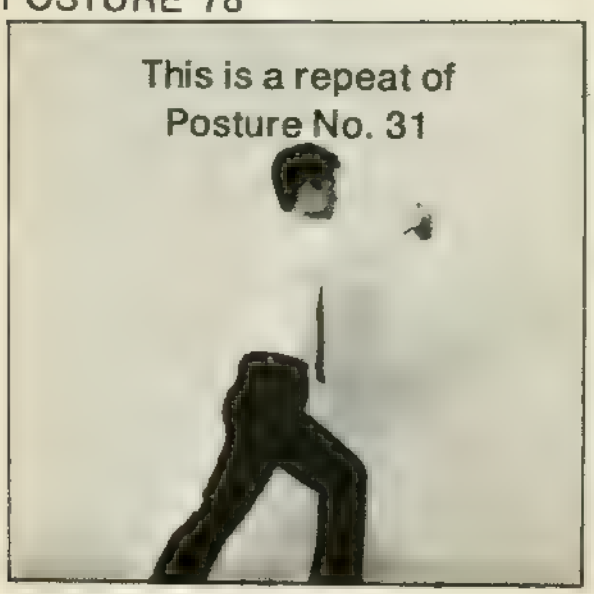


POSTURE 76

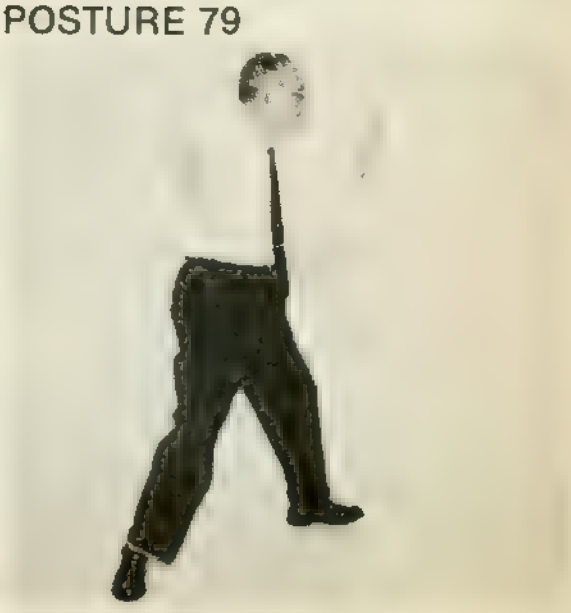
POSTURE 76 CONTINUED

POSTURE 77

POSTURE 78



POSTURE 79



POSTURE 80

POSTURE 81

POSTURE 81 CONTINUED

POSTURE 82

POSTURE 83

POSTURE 84

POSTURE 85

POSTURE 86

POSTURE 87

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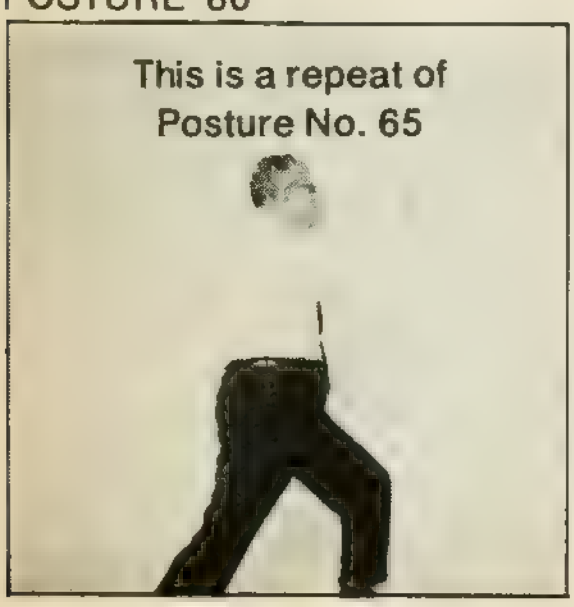
Posture No. 65



POSTURE 87 CONTINUED

POSTURE 88

POSTURE 89

POSTURE 89 CONTINUED

POSTURE 90

POSTURE 91

POSTURE 92

POSTURE 92 CONTINUED

POSTURE 93

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